



Fact Sheet
Election Integrity in Puerto Rico's 2020 General Election
October, 2020

ELECTION CONTEXT

The 2020 Statehood "YES" or "NO" plebiscite was publicly announced on May 16, 2020 upon the passage of the Puerto Rico legislature's [Act](#) to Define Puerto Rico's Ultimate Political Status ([Act No. 51-2020 \(S.B.1467\)](#)). The Act provided for public notices and advertisements leading up to the plebiscite. The plebiscite will be held on the same day as the Puerto Rico general election, November 3, 2020, and is being administered by the [Puerto Rico State Elections Commission \(PRSEC\)](#).

ELECTION PROCEDURES

Voter Registration: Puerto Rico residents had up to 50 days before the election to register to vote. Absentee ballots are being made available to members of the Military and residents that are temporarily outside of the territory. For the first time, an early voting option is being provided to help voters reduce potential exposure to COVID-19 on election day.

Voting Times: Polls open at 8:00 AM and close at 3:00 PM on election day. If a voter is in line by 3:00pm, or is serving a poll worker, they can still cast their votes after that time. The PRSEC complies with all the voter accessibility requirements under the VRA, UOCAVA, HAVA and all other [federal voting laws](#).

Public Holiday: In Puerto Rico, general elections are treated as a public holiday to maximize the opportunity for all registered voters to participate.

Voter Identification: Puerto Rico has a strict requirement that every voter must have a voter identification card in order to cast a ballot. The voter ID cards in Puerto Rico include a photograph of the individual and the process of obtaining it requires an in-person voter inscription process that includes identity verification comparable to what is required for other state issued photo IDs such as a driver's license. For any voter that loses their voter ID, they have the option to go to a nearby Joint Inscription Board office (commonly referred to as JIP, in Spanish) where they can get a replacement even on the same day as the election, if needed.

Voter Validation:

Leading up to the general election, PRSEC purchased new electronic poll books to provide [instant voter validation on Election Day](#).

Dry Law: During voting hours, a dry-law is in place which prohibits serving alcohol in public establishments outside of selected tourist locations.

Measures Against Duplicate Voting: Voters in Puerto Rico are required to coat their finger with ink that is visible under fluorescent light to protect against the possibility of duplicate



voting. The invisible ink cannot be washed off for at least 24 hours, creating a strong security measure.

Voting Equipment: PRSEC utilizes voting equipment, including voting machines and tabulators, from [Dominion Voting Systems Corporation](#), one of the top three providers of electronic voting hardware and software in the U.S. As of September 2019, Dominion voting machines, like those used in Puerto Rico, are also used in 2,000 jurisdictions in 33 states.

Transparent Participation: All poll workers are required to register and undergo a thorough training in elections law and procedure to guarantee a safe and effective process that protects the rights of all voters and the integrity of the election. All duly registered parties are allowed to have election officials overseeing the electoral process.

VALIDATION & CERTIFICATION OF RESULTS

Vote Tabulation: Once voting has ended, printouts of the tabulated results are initiated by the poll worker officials representing the registered parties participating in the election. Elections officials reconcile the machine vote count with the number of physical ballots cast as an additional verification process. The tabulated results are transmitted electronically to the PRCEE headquarters and then tallied as part of the election night canvass of the vote. All paper ballots are then packed in sealed boxes and taken via secure transportation to the CEE for the Post-Election Canvass of the Vote.

Election Night Canvass of the Vote: PRSEC will be issuing immediate results as they come in. These election night results will be available here: <https://plebiscito2020.ceepur.org/en/index.html#f>

Post-Election General Canvass of the Vote: Immediately after the preliminary election night results are tabulated, the PRCEE must begin the general canvass, which includes a comprehensive audit of the election results and processes. The process entails full transparency, with each duly registered party having representation, and ensuring the full privacy of voters. At the end of the general canvass the PRCEE must publish a certified statement of the results of the election.

Official Communication to Congress and the President: Once the PRCEE certifies the results, the Governor of Puerto Rico must officially communicate the certified results of the plebiscite to the U.S. Congress and the President of the United States.